THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following measures have been taken in this regard.

(i) A National Coordination Committee has been set-up, comprising representatives of various enforcement organisations such as Police, Revenue Intelligence, Customs, CBI, ITBP, BSF etc. to facilitate greater interdepartmental cooperation in the control of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. In West Bengal, 2 Coordination Committees have been set up for Calcutta and North Bengal, which meet regularly and exchange information and intelligence and take coordinated action. The Govt. of Assam has also been asked to set up a similar coordination mechanism.

(ii) Training is being imparted to the personnel of various enforcement agencies in wildlife law enforcement at the Centre and in West Bengal.

(iii) In Assam, patrolling has been intensified to prevent poaching and constant vigil is being kept against clandestine trade in rhino horns, through liaison with the police and custom authorities.

(iv) A sub-regional office of wildlife preservation, under this Ministry, has been opened at Guwahati, specifically to exercie vigilance against illegal trade in different market and transit points in the region, in coordination with the State Wildlife authorities and other enforcement agencies.

(v) Whenever cases of illegal trade in rhino horn are detected, they are investigated in details to unearth their various linkages to poaching and smuggling.

(vi) Rhino is placed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thus getting the highest level of protection against hunting and commercial exploitation.

(vii) India is a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and abides by the regulations of International trade in endangered species of animals and articles made thereof. Under the provisions of the convention, rhino is placed under Apendix I of CITES which bans international trade in the species, products and derivatives.

(viii) With a view to providing alternative home for Rhinos and also rehahilitating them in their erstwhile habitat a programme for 'Rehabilitation of Rhinos' has been started in Dudhwa National Park and Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh.

(ix) A network of 5 Wildlife sanctuaries and 4 national parks has been set up conservation of the species and its habitat. Financial assistance to provided by the Central government for development of these national parks and sanctuaries, on request from the State Governments.

(x) There is a scheme for payment of rewards to the informers, which among other things, helps in getting intelligence regarding smuggling of wildlife products.

Condition of Delhi Zoo

1903. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 19th July, 1997 under the caption "Delhi Zoo suffers from filth, neglect";

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Delhi Zoo is turning into wilderness due to poor maintenance and inadequate staff; and

(d) if so, what are the appropriate measures Government propose to take to make the zoo's environment friendly.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) It is not correct to say that Delhi Zoo suffers from filth and neglect as reported in the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 19th July, 1997. Every effort is being made to keep the zoo neat and clean and provide ideal conditions for the zoo animals as well as the visitors. However, certain problems are being experienced due to poor drainage system and also due to low topography. A comprehensive plan has already been drawn to improve the drainage system in association with the Government of Delhi.

(c) No Sir, despite the basic limitations as mentioned above and funds constraint, Delhi Zoo is still considered a reasonably good zoo because of its wide enclosures and open green areas. There is some shortage of staff, but the work is being attended by engaging daily rated workers. Action has already been initiated to fill up the vacant posts.

(d) The Central Zoo Authority constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 1992) for overseeing the functioning of the various zoos all over the country, has laid down rules and regulations for the better functioning of the zoos including making the zoo environment friendly. The following measures have been taken to make the zoo environment friendly:—

(i) A great deal of the area of the zoo has been covered with trees and shrubs. Even the area which was being used for dumping garbage has been planted. The greenery thus created would not merely enhance the asthetic value but also support a great deal of Wildlife including the birds.

(ii) Environment friendly measures such as installation of bio-gas plant, incinerator, commissioning of battery operated trollies for visitors etc. have been undertaken.

(iii) Dustbins have been provided for proper collection of the garbage.

(iv) New elephant shelter, stand off bariers, feeding cells have been constructed in a number of enclosures.

(v) Welded mesh has been fixed above the perimeter wall along the residential colony to prevent scaling of the wall.

National Environmental Tribunal Act

1904. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has not yet framed the rules required for the National Environmental Tribunal Act which got the presidential assent two years back;

(b) if so, what is the reasons for such a long delay; and

(c) what is the action taken by his Ministry with regard to the observations made by the Standing Committee in its report submitted recently?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The draft National Environment Tribunal Rules have been framed by the Ministry and would be notified after they are vetted by the Ministry of Law & Justice. The process for appointment of a Chairperson of the National Environment Tribunal has also been initiated by the Ministry. Approval of Ministry of Finance has been sought